

Update

Fall 2013

Using Interpreters in Mediation

By Andrew Kidde

Over the years we have had a small but steady number of mediations where an interpreter was required. Given recent demographic trends, we can only expect that number to go up. According to recent census data, about 36 percent of Bellevue's population speaks a language other than English at home, and according to Bellevue School District, there are 81 different languages spoken by students enrolled in their schools.



either of the parties, or an indirect involvement in the dispute. Some mediators have language skills and may be able to undertake work in languages other than in English, but they may lack the skills of experienced interpreters.

Interpreting is not a casual matter. It is a formal profession with a code of ethics and well defined best practices.

Our mediation service needs to be accessible and relevant to the whole community we serve. We need to be able to provide comparable service to people who have no English, or who have some difficulty communicating because English is their second language. Non-English speakers in the US are practiced at surviving linguistically and creating good initial impressions. So they may display more competence in initial conversations than they could sustain in longer and more complex dialogues. Functioning in a mediation is a complex task, and we must also be aware of a possible power imbalance for the non-native speaker.

Another tempting alternative is to think that a party's friend or relative who speaks English well could be used as an interpreter. It is usually hard to know however, how accurately they interpret, and how much of their own bias they inject into the discussion. It is not usually good practice to use anyone as an interpreter who has any relationship with

Interpreters must learn to use both the simultaneous and consecutive interpreting and when to use which type. Simultaneous is on-going interpreting conducted at a low whisper while speaking occurs. Consecutive is interpreting that occurs at the end of the statement. Interpreting is a hard job -- if you have any doubt of that, just remember how challenging our simple restating exercise can be, and then add on top of that the problem of translating and the fatigue that may set in after a few hours of this. It can be made much harder if the people using the interpreter service don't know the proper protocols for working with interpreters.

For mediators, working with interpreters in mediation adds complexity to an already difficult job. It requires adjusting to a slower pace of work; many mediators will have little opportunity to gain this experience and will need some training in working with interpreters, just as interpreters will need some training in working with mediators and a basic understanding of the mediation process.

The mediators also need to understand how to work most effectively in this different context. Several questions may come up. Who should the mediator look at: the party or the interpreter? Should there be extra breaks? What signs might tell them whether the interpreter is doing a good job? If the mediator believes there is a cultural misunderstanding in addition to the language barrier, can the mediator rely on the interpreter to be a cultural interpreter as well as a language interpreter?

These are important questions that any mediator needs to know before he or she mediates a case with an interpreter for the first time. To get the answers, please come to our next in-service on Sept. 16 (see this page for details) when Martha Cohen, director of the King County Superior Court Office of Interpreter Services will present to us on using interpreters in mediation.

**October In-service Training:
Tips on Working with Interpreters
Presented by Martha Cohen
Tues., Oct. 3, 6:30 to 8p.m.**

This session will focus on how to work effectively with interpreters and will include information on the interpreting process, qualifying an interpreter, interpreter ethics, and tips for conducting interviews through an interpreter. Included will be a short hands-on practice and a video demonstrating appropriate and inappropriate interpreting. Attendees are encouraged to come with questions and scenarios you have encountered.

Martha Cohen is manager of Office of Interpreter Services at King County Superior Court.

Please consider coming at 6p.m. to socialize and share some light snacks.

Practice Makes Perfect

By Natalie Daniels

Resolution Washington, the association under which all Washington Dispute Resolution Centers, including the Bellevue Neighborhood Mediation Program, operates, has recently recognized a truth that we have all known for some time. Namely, if we do not use our skills as mediators, then we lose those skills. As a consequence, Resolution Washington has adopted "Minimum Standards & Best Practices for Continuing Education of DRC Mediators." Here are some highlights:

"Once a mediator has been certified, *the minimum standard* for maintaining certification requires ongoing supervision and assessment by the local DRC. *Best Practices* recommend re-certification every three years by fulfilling requirements in the following three components: (1) Continuing Education; (2) Practice; and (3) Competency." In terms of practice mediating, the recommendation is "A minimum of two cases per year, or the possible substitution of a mock mediation when necessary because of DRC caseload."

The Bellevue Mediation Program recognizes that many of our mediation practicum graduates, through no fault of their own, have not mediated two cases within the last twelve months. We don't want to lose you or your skills!

Please join us on Oct. 24 for a skill building workshop featuring mock mediations for all. We will also have need for role players, so if you are interested in the workshop, but have not yet graduated from the practicum, please consider volunteering your acting skills for the evening. If you are interested refreshing your mediation skills, but Oct. 24 doesn't fit your schedule, just let us know. We are more than happy to arrange for individualized mock mediation practice.

RSVP by email: mediation_info@bellevuewa.gov, or by calling 425-452-4091.

Parent—Teen Update

By

Galit Arad-Trutner and Pam Orbach



The key to fostering connection in the face of a 'no' is always hearing 'yes' to something else.

As your new coordinators to the Parent-Teen mediation program, we are approaching the 2013/14 year with excitement. We have trained with this program and mediated for this program, and we have seen the power that mediation has to strengthen individual families and our community as a whole. We are committed to making the Parent-Teen program even stronger in the year to come.

Adult and teen mediators will gear up in September to create safe arenas for families to have open and honest communication. Growth trainings for mediators will occur throughout the year, and there will be opportunities for teen mediators to use their skills within the community in creative situations.

In addition to mediations, the engagement and communication workshops will continue. We are looking forward to a year of fostering connection in all that we do.

Our first in service will be on Sept.18 at 6p.m. See you there!

BNMP Training Opportunities For Mediators and Conciliators

Conciliation Training:

Wed., Sept. 25 from 9a.m. to 5p.m.
in Room 1E-120

Thur., Sept. 26 from 9a.m. to 5p.m.
in Room 1E-118

Neighborhood In-Service Trainings:

Working with Interpreters in Mediation

with Martha Cohen

(for adult and teen mediators)

Thurs., Oct. 3 from 6:30 to 8p.m.
in Room 1E-120

Landlord Tenant Conflicts In-Service

To be offered in January

Workshops:

Difficult Conversations: How to approach a challenging neighbor

Wed., Sept. 11 from 7 to 9p.m.
Location: Newport Library

Mock Mediation Workshop

Thurs., Oct. 24 from 6 to 8p.m.
In Room 1E-118

Parent-Teen In-Service Trainings:

Parent-Teen Mediation Role Play

Wed., Sept. 18, from 6 to 8p.m.
in Room 1E-112

Communication Workshop Training

Wed., Oct. 23, from 6 to 8p.m.
in Room 1E-118

RSVP by email: mediation_info@bellevuewa.gov or call 425-452-4091

Program Staff:

Program Co-Manager:	Cheryl Cohen	-	452-5222
Program Co-Manager:	Andrew Kidde	-	452-5288
Program Assistant	Natalie Daniels	-	452-2897
Foreclosure Case Manager	Julia Devin	-	452-4091

City of Bellevue website: <http://www.bellevuewa.gov>
(Look for the Mediation Program under "Neighborhood Information")

Volunteer Profile:

Sasha Phillip



Born in India and raised in Germany, Sasha first moved to Seattle area as a high school student in 1992, and for a second time in 2001, after completing a B.A. in Psychology and Political Science at Vassar College and a J.D. at Tulane University. In her 12-year career as a civil defense litigator, Sasha has participated in dozens of mediations as a party advocate. However, she represents only one party's position in litigated disputes, and is grateful for the opportunity to make a small but real difference in people's lives by helping Bellevue residents achieve creative and mutually beneficial resolutions to conflict outside the litigation context. Sasha has completed both the University of Washington's Mediation Training Program and the BNMP's mediation training, and has been a volunteer conciliator with the Bellevue Neighborhood Mediation Program since early 2012. She is enrolled in the mediation practicum and hopes to start mediating cases soon. Sasha lives with her husband of two years, two teenage step-sons, two cats and three chickens in Kenmore, is the Chair of the Board of Directors for the local non-profit organization CAREs of Washington, and enjoys gardening, cooking, kayaking, tennis, and singing with the Seattle Symphony Chorale.

**BELLEVUE
NEIGHBORHOOD MEDIATION PROGRAM**

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